



Office of Public Instruction
Linda McCulloch, Superintendent
PO Box 202501
Helena, MT 59620-2501

Montana Pupil Transportation News and Updates April 2003



Maxine Mougeot, Director of Pupil Transportation
Phone 406-444-3096
Fax 406-444-0509
mmougeot@state.mt.us

A Monthly Newsletter Published by Pupil Transportation, School Budgeting and Accounting Division

Legislative News

The 2003 Montana State Legislature passed Senate Bill 424, which includes language that does a number of things for pupil transportation. First of all, and probably most importantly, it simplified the very complex funding formula by eliminating the weighted ridership and assigning a set mileage rate based on the size of the bus (see below). Eliminating the weighted ridership will eliminate the November High School Rider Count. Mileage rates will no longer be based on the number of kids riding the bus. Districts will continue to list kids that ride each bus on the TR-2 and report those students to the OPI on the TR-1 (Route Form) as usual, however the mileage rate won't be based on that information.

Beginning on July 1, 2003, bus mileage reimbursement will be based on the following table:

School Bus Capacity	Rate Per Mile
Non-bus Mileage	\$0.50
Up to 49 Passenger	\$0.95
50 – 59 Passenger	\$1.15
60 – 69 Passenger	\$1.36
70 – 79 Passenger	\$1.57
80 or more Passenger	\$1.80

This change results in an increase of \$1.7 million in state transportation aid funding and \$1.7 million in county transportation aid funding. The increase in state



transportation funding comes from funding that, in the past, was appropriated to the transportation block grant. The state will reduce the district transportation fund school block grants (HB 124) by half starting in 2003-04 to fund the mileage rate increases.

The updated Transportation Budgeting Spreadsheet will be posted on the web as soon as possible but no later than June 1, 2003. There will be changes to the TR-1 and TR-2 but all the other transportation forms will remain the same.

Questions?? Call Maxine at (406) 444-3096.

Second Semester TR-5 (Individual Transportation Contracts) and TR-6 (Bus Route) Claim Forms Are In The Mail

The claim forms are due to your county superintendent before **MAY 10**. Your county superintendent should review the claims and forward them to the OPI before **MAY 24**. The state transportation payment will be made in June.

There is not a lot of time between the due date and the payment date, so please check these forms carefully. Watch for these common errors: data entry errors, wrong information on the TR-1 (Bus Route) and the TR-4 (Individual Transportation Contract), missing information or an incorrect calculation. I certainly appreciate all the help I can get to make sure the 2nd semester payment is as accurate as possible.

TR-13's (School Bus Inspection forms) for the 1st semester of 2003-04 will be mailed in May.

Since You Asked

Do you know where I can find bid and procurement information? We want to buy a new bus.

<http://www.discoveringmontana.com/doa/doa/divisions.htm>
Click on <Procurement and Printing>.

Is my school required to get three bids when purchasing a new bus?

Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 20-10-110 School Bus Purchase – Contract – Bids (1) states that: "When a district purchases a school bus, the trustees may purchase such school bus under an installment contract, which will be completely executed within 3 years from the date of the purchase." It is always best to go out for bids under this section, however "the trustees also may purchase a school bus without advertising for bids under the provisions of MCA 20-9-204."

What does that mean? Bidding out a bus purchase is recommended but is not required. It means that a district can buy a yellow school bus without sending it to bid if there is a good reason not to. For example, assume a district wants to buy another school bus. The district might own a particular

brand of bus, the drivers prefer it, the mechanic has extra parts and likes to work on that brand, and it might therefore be detrimental for the district to buy a different brand. In this instance, the trustees should fully document the reasons for purchasing without bids, and then resolve to purchase the bus. Not purchasing the particular brand of bus could have a negative impact on the students, the bus drivers and the overall educational functions of the district. Even when formal bids are not taken, it's a good idea to get as many quotes as possible before making the purchase.

New Look For The MAPT Web Site

Administration of the MAPT web site has recently changed hands. Gordy Conn designed and maintained the site for some years now. Due to a heavy workload at his present position, Gordy doesn't have the time keep up with our needs. We want to thank Gordy for all the work he has done. This is an important resource for transportation personnel wanting updates on the school bus industry.



The good news is that we found a hard working student who is excited to work on the site as a project. Miss Marija Carte is our new administrator. She has given the site a new look and is very excited about the changes she is making. The site should be up and running soon so please visit the site by clicking on the

following link or typing it into your browser: www.schoolbusmontana.com. If there is anything you would like to see on this site that is not currently there, please send me an email at mmougeot@state.mt.us.

The site is sponsored by Hartley's School Buses from Rugby, North Dakota. Please take a moment to call Hartley and let him know what you think of the site. Hartley's number is 701-776-5746. The MAPT committee and OPI would like to take this opportunity to thank Hartley's School Buses for providing this resource.

Thanks a million HARTLEY!!!

MAPT Conference Information

The Montana Association for Pupil Transportation has sent out the registration forms for the June 18-20, 2003 Conference to be held in Butte at the Copper King Hotel and Conference Center. The conference title is "Proud To Be in 2003." Registration is due to Linda Michel at MAPT by June 1st. The registration fee is \$70 if paid by June 1.

Conference information was included in the OPI mailing for March. If you need additional copies of any of the materials, just send an email to me at mmougeot@state.mt.us. Registration materials can be found on the Pupil Transportation web site at www.opi.state.mt.us. Choose <Pupil Transportation> from the Programs and Services drop

down list. Conference events include First Aid Renewal Class, School Bus Road-e-o, vendor presentations, good food, peer communication and many interesting workshop sessions and speakers. One way to save money is to offer to bring a bus full of drivers from neighboring schools. I look forward to seeing you there. Sign up early and get the discount. Don't forget to nominate your outstanding driver, special needs driver and bus aid for the awards that will be given out at the conference.



School Bus Driver Express

Butte Montana

STN Expo and Trade Show in Reno, Nevada

Conference dates are August 2-6, 2003 in Reno Nevada. The conference is held at the Reno Hilton each year. The conference schedule, hotel, registration and any other information is available at <http://www.stnonline.com>.

Driver Training For Next School Year

Kalispell Public Schools is planning to hold a daylong driver training session on September 6, 2003. The district will invite approximately 150 drivers from surrounding communities. The tentative schedule includes sessions on Student Management, Railroad Crossing Safety, Legislative Updates and the Law, Highway Patrol Issues, Legal Issues, and Air Brake Inspections.

Havre Public Schools is beginning to put together plans to do the same kind of workshop in their area. This workshop will be later in September. Havre will also invite drivers from the surrounding communities.

I will continue to advertise the training around the state as the agenda develops and speakers are confirmed. I am delighted with the response that schools and county superintendents have shown towards this new requirement. Most of the drivers that I have visited with are so happy to come together with a group of their peers to learn, share, meet old friends and make new friends.

In The News

****IMPORTANT****

Carpenter School Bus Problem is More Widespread Than Originally Thought!!

Since we first received a notice on April 14, 2003 about a potential for cracked or broken welds in the roof structure of Carpenter Type "C" and "D" school buses built at its Mitchell, Indiana plant between 1986 and 1995, more

important facts have developed. Accordingly, the following additional information is provided:

1. Inspection of Carpenter school buses in various parts of the country has revealed cracked and broken welds in the roof structure. The problem is clearly not confined to Florida where it was first found.

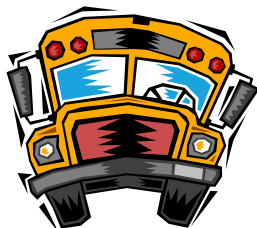
2. Inspection of some Type "B" Carpenter school buses has revealed cracked and broken welds in the roof structure.

3. ALL Carpenter school buses built at the manufacturing facility in Mitchell, IN used the same roof design.

4. Each Carpenter school bus includes a 6-digit body number that appears on the Carpenter body data plate. If that 6-digit body number starts with the number 4, then the bus was built in the Richmond, Indiana, plant and utilizes full-length body bows. This design does **NOT** need to be inspected.

5. **Based on the above information, the School Bus Information Council believes it would be prudent for states and local school districts to inspect the welds in the roof structure of all Carpenter school buses (Type "A," "B," "C," and "D") that were manufactured in Mitchell, IN, from 1986 to approximately late 1995.**

6. **If the 6-digit body number that appears on the Carpenter body data plate starts with any number other than the number 4, then the bus was manufactured in Mitchell, IN, and should be included in the inspection.**



School Bus Recalls

Recall 02V-220 involves certain Minotour units manufactured from March 3, 1999 through June 26, 2002 with 36" track mounted seats. These units fail to comply with FMVSS No. 210. The seat belt anchorages on these buses will not hold the required pull.

Recall 02V-160 & 02-172 (Canada #) involves certain Minotour SRW, Minotour DRW, Conventional, MVP-ER, MVP-EF and ER units manufactured between August 2000 and March 2001. The defect is such that on some seat belts, the cover halves for the retractable portion of the belt can separate completely and release the seat belt connector. If this occurs, one of the load bearing pins in the connector could separate from the connector and render the seat belt unusable. In the event of a crash, the seat occupant would not be properly restrained possibly resulting in injury.

Recall 02V-221 involves MVP-EF units manufactured between June 1, 1999 and March 7, 2002. The defect is such

that on some units, the incorrect wheel studs have been installed; therefore, the wheel lug nut may not tighten completely. In the event the wheel should loosen, there is a potential for losing control of the vehicle resulting in a crash without warning.

Recall 02V-320 involves Thomas Saf-T-Liner ER, Saf-T-Liner HD, Transit Liner MVP-ER, and Transit Liner ER school and transit buses equipped with Reyco rear axles air suspension and manufactured from February 5, 2001 through February 22, 2002. The fastener connecting the control rod at the lower end may not be properly torqued to 81 in/lbs., if it comes loose, the control rod can become disconnected causing the air bag to deflate allowing the driveline angle to exceed the maximum operating angle. This could result in a driveline failure, which could result in loss of vehicle control and crash without prior warning.

Customers involved will be notified directly by Thomas. Customers can contact their dealers to arrange for repairs to be made.

PROMPTLY RETURN TRAINING VIDEOS

Those of you utilizing the driver training videos are doing a great job of getting them back to us on time. The waiting lists are quite long so if you don't hear from us right away, it is because your name hasn't come up yet. To reserve a video, please call Mike Waterman at (406) 444-4524.

The secret of staying young is to live honestly, eat slowly, and lie about your age. – Lucille Ball

IMPORTANT DATES

April 26, 2003 Legislature adjourned

May 8 – 18 Maxine is on vacation

May 10, 2002 Second Semester TR-5's and TR-6's due from districts to county superintendent

May 24, 2002 Second Semester TR-5's and TR-6's due from county superintendents to the OPI

May 25, 2002 TR-13's (Bus Inspection Form) mailed to Districts

June 1, 2003 Updated Transportation Budgeting Worksheet posted to the Web

June 19, 20, 21, 2002 MAPT Conference in Belgrade, Montana

June 25, 2002 Second Semester Transportation payment sent to Counties

Update driver certificates, bus inspection forms, route information and contracts regularly.